

METRO

Judge rips fake heiress, says she's too focused on movie deal

By Rebecca Rosenberg

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Anna Sorokin
Steven Hirsch

Her story impressed Netflix execs — but not a Manhattan judge.

A fake socialite who swindled thousands of dollars from banks, businesses and wealthy pals — and earned herself a Netflix series for it — was ripped in court Tuesday for her lack of regret.

“I see no remorse,” Justice Diane Kiesel told Anna Sorokin, 27, who sauntered into court wearing black-rimmed glasses, a makeshift white headband and a prison-issue sweatsuit.

“She seems more concerned about who is going to play her in the movie than what she’s done to the people she allegedly took advantage of,” said Kiesel in Manhattan Supreme Court.

Sorokin, who goes by the alias Anna Delvey, pursed her lips in court as photographers snapped her picture.

The judge refused to come down from the prosecutor’s offer of three to nine years in prison, calling the defense lawyer’s request for one to three years “a mere slap on the wrist for a crime this serious.”

Attorney Todd Spodek filed a lengthy memorandum arguing for leniency.

Netflix just inked a deal to acquire the rights to Sorokin’s story that was featured in New York magazine’s article “How Anna Delvey Tricked New York’s Party People.” Sorokin’s arrest was first reported by The Post.

“Scandal” creator Shonda Rhimes has been tapped to write the series.

Sorokin allegedly posed as a German heiress with a \$60 million fortune, scamming her way into the New York social scene and bilking \$270,000 from a string of victims.

She invited a pal on an all-expenses-paid trip to Marrakech and used a debit card she knew would be declined.

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She then asked the friend to pay the \$62,000 bill for the luxury villa — which included a personal butler and a private pool — and allegedly promised to reimburse her. She didn’t.

The blue-eyed German national also allegedly failed to pay for a private plane she chartered to Omaha, Neb., for a Berkshire Hathaway annual shareholders meeting.

In yet another scheme, Sorokin is accused of trying to obtain a \$22 million loan from two banks to open a private nightclub. While she was busy trying to realize her business venture, she stayed at swanky Manhattan hotels and allegedly skipped out on the bills.

It turns out the social grifter, whose father is a truck driver, doesn’t have a cent to her name, according to prosecutor Catherine McCaw.

Sorokin, who’s **charged with grand larceny, theft of services and other raps**, faces up to 15 years in prison.

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How an Aspiring ‘It’ Girl Tricked New York’s Party People — and Its Banks

Photo: Sergio Corvacho

It started with money, as it so often does in New York. A crisp \$100 bill slipped across the smooth surface of the mid-century-inspired concierge desk at 11 Howard, the sleek new boutique hotel in Soho. Looking up, Neffatari Davis, the 25-year-old concierge, who goes by “Neff,” was surprised to see the cash had come from a young woman who seemed to be around her age. She had a heart-shaped face and pouty lips surrounded by a wild tangle of red hair, her eyes framed by incongruously chunky black glasses that Neff, an aspiring cinematographer with an eye for detail, identified as Céline. She was looking, she said in an accent that sounded European, for “the best food in Soho.”

“What’s your name?” Neff asked, after the girl waved off her suggestions of [Carbone](#) and the [Mercer Kitchen](#) and settled on the [Butcher’s Daughter](#).

“Anna Delvey,” said the young woman. She’d be staying at the hotel for a month, she went on, which Neff also found surprising: Usually it was only celebrities who came for such long stretches. But Neff checked the system, and there it was. Delvey was booked into a Howard Deluxe, one of the hotel’s midrange options, about \$400 a night, with ceramic sculptures on the walls and oversize windows looking onto the bustling streets of Soho. It was February 18, 2017.

“Thanks,” said Delvey. “See you around.”

That turned out to be a promise. Over the next few weeks, Delvey stopped by often to ask Neff’s advice, slipping her \$100 each time. Neff would wax on about how [Mr. Purple](#) was totally washed and [Vandal](#) was for hipsters, while Delvey’s eyes would flit around behind

her glasses. Eventually, Neff realized: Delvey already *knew* all the cool places to go — not only that, she knew the names of the bartenders and waiters and owners. “This is not a guest that needs my *help*,” it dawned on her. “This is a guest that wants my *time*.”

This was not out of the ordinary. Since she’d started working there, Neff, a Washington, D.C., native with a wedge of natural hair, giant Margaret Keane eyes, and a gap-toothed smile, had found herself playing therapist to all manner of hotel guests: husbands cheating on their wives, wives getting away from their husbands. “You just sit there and listen, because that’s your concierge life,” she recalled recently, at a coffee shop near her apartment in Crown Heights.

Usually, these guests went back to their own lives, leaving Neff to hers. But February became March, and Delvey kept showing up. She’d bring food down, or a glass of extra-dry white wine, and settle near Neff’s desk to chat. Some of the other hotel employees found Anna deeply annoying. She could be oddly ill-mannered for a rich person: *Please* and *thank you* were not in her vocabulary, and she would sometimes say things that were “Not *racist*,” Neff said, “but *classist*.” (“What are you bitches, broke?” Anna asked her and another hotel employee.) But to Neff, it didn’t come across as mean-spirited. More like she was some kind of old-fashioned princess who’d been plucked from an ancient European castle and deposited in the modern world, although according to Anna she came from modern-day Germany and her father ran a business producing solar panels. And despite her unassuming figure — “a sort of *Sound of Music* Fräulein,” one acquaintance later put it — Anna quickly established herself as one of 11 Howard’s most generous guests. “People would fight to take her packages upstairs,” said Neff. “*Fight*, because you knew you were getting \$100.” Over time, Delvey got more and more comfortable in the hotel, swanning around in sheer Alexander Wang leggings or, occasionally, a hotel robe. “She *ran* that place,” said Neff. “You know how Rihanna walks out with wineglasses? That was Anna. And they let her. *Bye, Ms. Delvey ...*”

Anna was preparing to launch a business, a Soho House-ish type club, she told Neff, focused on art, with locations in L.A., London, Hong Kong, and Dubai, and Neff became her de facto secretary, organizing business lunches and dinners at restaurants like Seamore's and the hotel's own Le Coucou. ("That's what they do in the rich culture, is meals," said Neff.) On occasion, when Delvey showed up while the concierge desk was busy, she would stand at the counter, coolly counting out bills until she got Neff's attention. "I'd be like, 'Anna, there's a line of eight people.' But she'd keep putting money down." And even though Neff had begun to think of Anna as not just a hotel guest but a friend, *a real friend*, she didn't hesitate to take it. "A little selfish of me," she admitted later. "But ... yeah."

Who can blame her? This was Manhattan in the 21st century, and money is more powerful than ever. Rare is the city dweller who, when presented with an opportunity for a sudden and unexpected influx of cash, doesn't grasp for it. Of course, this money almost always comes with strings attached. Sometimes you can barely see them, like that vaudeville bit in which the pawn dives for a loose bill only to find it pulled just ahead. Still, everyone makes the reach. Because here, money is the one thing that no one can ever have enough of.





From left: The Battery in San Francisco. Photo: annadlvv/Instagram
On her way to Art Basel in 2015. Photo: annadlvv/Instagram

For a stretch of time in New York, no small amount of the cash in circulation was coming from Anna Delvey. “She gave to everyone,” said Neff. “Uber drivers, \$100 cash. Meals — listen. You know how you reach for your credit card? She wouldn’t let me.”

The way Anna spent money, it was like she couldn’t get rid of it fast enough. Her room was overflowing with shopping bags from Acne and Supreme, and in between meetings, she’d invite Neff to foot massages, cryotherapy, manicures (Anna favored “a light Wes Anderson pink,” according to Neff). One day, she brought Neff to a session with a personal trainer—slash—life coach she’d found online, a svelte, ageless Oprah-esque figure who works with celebrities like Dakota Johnson.

“Stop sinking into your body,” the trainer commanded Anna.

“Shoulders back, navel to spine. You are a bright woman; you want to

be a businesswoman. You gotta be staying strong on your own power.”

Afterward, as Neff panted on the sidelines, Anna bought a package of sessions. “It was, I’m not lying, \$4,500,” said Neff.

Anna paid cash.

Neff’s boyfriend didn’t understand why she was spending so much time with this weird girl from work. Anna didn’t understand why Neff had a boyfriend. But he was rich, Neff protested. He’d promised to finance her first movie. “Dump him,” Anna advised. “I have more money.” *She* would finance the movie.

Neff did dump the guy. Not because of what Anna had said, although she had no reason to doubt it. Her new friend, she discovered, belonged to a vast and glittering social circle. “Anna knew *everyone*,” said Neff. At night, she’d taken to hosting large dinners at [Le Coucou](#), attended by CEOs, artists, athletes, even celebrities. One night, Neff found herself seated next to her childhood idol, Macaulay Culkin. “Which was awkward,” she said. “Because I had so many questions. And he was *right there*. But they were talking about, like, friend stuff. So I never got the chance to be like, ‘So, you the godfather to Michael Jackson’s kids?’ ”

Despite her seemingly nomadic living situation, Anna had long been a figure on the New York social scene. “She was at all the best parties,” said marketing director Tommy Saleh, who met her in 2013 at Le Baron in Paris during Fashion Week. Delvey had been an intern at European scenester magazine *Purple* and appeared to be tight with the magazine’s editor-in-chief, Olivier Zahm, and its man-about-town, André Saraiva, an owner of [Le Baron](#) — two of “the 200 or so people you see everywhere,” as Saleh put it: Chilterns and Loulou’s in London; the Crow’s Nest in Montauk; Paul’s Baby Grand and the [Bowery Hotel](#); [Frieze](#), [Coachella](#), [Art Basel](#). “She introduced herself, and she was a sweet girl, very polite,” said Saleh. “Then we’re just hanging with my friends all of a sudden.”

Soon, Anna was everywhere too. “She managed to be in all the sort of right places,” recalled one acquaintance who met Anna in 2015 at a party thrown by a start-up mogul in Berlin. “She was wearing really fancy clothing” — Balenciaga, or maybe Alaïa — “and someone mentioned that she flew in on a private jet.” It was unclear where exactly Anna came from — she told people she was from Cologne, but her German wasn’t very good — or what the source of her wealth was. But that wasn’t unusual. “There are so many trust-fund kids running around,” said Saleh. “Everyone is your best friend, and you don’t know a thing about anyone.”

After a gallerist at Pace introduced her to Michael Xufu Huang, the extremely young, extremely dapper collector and founder of Beijing’s M Woods museum, Anna proposed they go together to the Venice Biennale. Huang thought it was “a little weird” when Anna asked him to book the plane tickets and hotel on his credit card. “But I was like, *Okay, whatever*,” he said. It was also strange, he noticed during their time there, that Anna only ever paid with cash, and after they got back, she seemed to forget she’d said she’d pay him back. “It was not a lot of money,” he said. “Like two or three thousand dollars.” After a while, Huang kind of forgot about it too.

When you’re superrich, you can be forgetful in this way. Which is maybe why no one thought much of the instances in which Anna did things that seemed odd for a wealthy person: calling a friend to have her put a taxi from the airport on her credit card, or asking to sleep on someone’s couch, or moving into someone’s apartment with the tacit agreement to pay rent, and then ... not doing it. Maybe she had so much money she just lost track of it.

The following January, Anna hired a PR firm to put together a birthday party at one of her favorite restaurants, [Sadelle’s](#) in Soho. “It was a lot of very cool, very successful people,” said Huang, who, while aware Anna owed him money for their Venice trip, remained mostly unconcerned about it, at least until the restaurant, having seen Polaroids of Huang and Anna at the party on Instagram, messaged him a few days later. “They were like, ‘Do you have her contact info?’ ”

he says now. “ ‘Because she didn’t pay her bill.’ Then I realized, *Oh my God, she is not legit.*”

As Anna bounced around the globe, there was some speculation as to where her means to do this came from, though no one seemed to care that much so long as the bills got paid.

“I thought she had family money,” said Jayma Cardoso, one of the owners of the Surf Lodge in Montauk. Delvey’s father was a diplomat to Russia, one friend was sure. No, another insisted, he was an oil-industry titan. “As far as I knew, her family was the Delvey family that is big in antiques in Germany,” said another acquaintance, a millionaire tech CEO. (It is unclear what family he was referring to.) The CEO met Anna through the boyfriend she was running around with for a while, a futurist on the TED-Talks circuit who’d been profiled in *The New Yorker*. For about two years, they’d been kind of like a team, showing up in places frequented by the itinerant wealthy, living out of fancy hotels and hosting sceney dinners where the Futurist talked up his app and Delvey spoke of the private club she wanted to open once she turned 25 and came into her trust fund.

Then it was 2016. The Futurist, whose app never materialized, moved to the Emirates, and Anna came to New York on her own, determined to make her arts club a reality, although she worried to Marc Kremers, the London creative director helping her with branding, that the name she’d come up with — the Anna Delvey Foundation, or ADF — was “too narcissistic.”

Early on, Anna and architect Ron Castellano, a friend of her *Purple* cohort, had scouted a building on the Lower East Side, but it turned out to be too close to a school to get a liquor license, and soon Anna had shifted her aspirations uptown. Through her connections, she’d befriended Gabriel Calatrava, one of the sons of famed architect Santiago. His family’s real-estate advisory company, Calatrava Grace, had helped her “secure the lease,” she informed people, on the perfect space: 45,000 square feet occupying six floors of the historic Church Missions House, a landmarked building on the corner of Park Avenue

and 22nd. The heart of the club would be, she said, a “dynamic visual-arts center,” with a rotating array of pop-up shops curated by artist Daniel Arsham, whom she knew from her *Purple* days, and exhibitions and installations from blue-chip artists like Urs Fischer, Damien Hirst, Jeff Koons, and Tracey Emin. For the inaugural event, Anna told people, the artist Christo had agreed to wrap the building. Some people raised their eyebrows at the grandiosity of this plan, but to others it made sense, in a New York kind of way. The building’s owner, developer Aby Rosen, was no stranger to the private-club genre; a few years earlier, he’d bought a midtown building and opened the Core Club, which housed an art collection. He also happened to own [11 Howard](#).

With the help of Calatrava executive Michael Jaffe, a former employee of Rosen’s RFR realty firm, Anna soon began meeting with big names in the food-and-beverage world to discuss possibilities in the space. One was André Balazs, who, according to Anna, suggested they add two floors of hotel rooms. Another was Richie Notar, one of the founders of [Nobu](#), who did a walk-through of the building with Anna as she described her vision, which included three restaurants, a juice bar, and a German bakery. “Apparently her family was prominent in Germany,” Notar said, “and funding this big project for her.”

But a project of this size required more capital than even someone of Anna’s apparently considerable resources could manage: approximately \$25 million, “in addition to \$25m existing,” Anna wrote in an email to a prominent Silicon Valley publicist in 2016. “If you think this is something you could help us with and have anyone in mind who would be a good cultural fit for this project.” But by fall, Anna had turned on the idea of private investors, in part because she didn’t want anyone telling her what to do. “If we were to bring in investors, they would say, ‘Oh, she’s 25; she doesn’t know what she’s doing,’ ” Anna explained later. “I wanted to build the first one myself.”

To help secure a loan, one of Anna’s “finance friends” had told her to get in touch with Joel Cohen, best known as the prosecutor of Jordan Belfort, a.k.a. the Wolf of Wall Street. Cohen now worked at Gibson

Dunn, a large firm known for its real-estate practice. He put her in touch with Andy Lance, a partner who happened to have the exact kind of expertise that Anna was looking for. In the past, she'd complained to friends about feeling condescended to by older male lawyers because of her age and gender. But Lance was different. "He knows how to talk to women," she said. "And he would explain to me the right amount, without being patronizing." According to Anna, she and Lance spoke every day. "He was there all the time. He would answer in the middle of the night, or when he was in Turks and Caicos for Christmas."

After filling out Gibson Dunn's new-client-intake form, which included checking boxes that confirmed the client had the resources to pay and would not embarrass the firm, Lance put Anna in touch with several large financial institutions, including Los Angeles-based City National Bank and Fortress Investment Group. "Our client Anna Delvey is undertaking a very exciting redevelopment of 281 Park Avenue South, backed by a marquee team for this type of venue and space," Lance wrote in one email, in which he explained that Anna needed the loan because "her personal assets, which are quite substantial, are located outside the US, some of them in trust with UBS outside the US." The monies she received, he added, would be "fully secured" by a letter of credit from the Swiss bank. (Lance did not respond to requests for comment.)

When the banker at City National asked to see the UBS statements, he received a list of figures from a man named Peter W. Hennecke. "Please use these for your projections for now," Hennecke wrote in an email. "I'll send the physical statements on Monday."

"Question: Are you from UBS?" the banker replied, puzzled by Hennecke's AOL address.

No, Anna explained. "Peter is head of my family office."

With Anna in fund-raising mode, the artists and celebrity friends at her dinners were gradually supplanted by men with "Goyard briefcases

and Rolexes, and Hublot, like that Jay-Z lyric,” according to Neff, who at one point looked across the table at Le Coucou and recognized the face of infamous “pharma bro” Martin Shkreli, who would later be convicted of securities fraud. Anna introduced Shkreli as a “dear friend,” although it was really the only time they’d met, Shkreli told *New York* in a letter from the penitentiary; Anna was close with one of his executives. “Anna did seem to be a popular ‘woman about town’ who knew everyone,” he wrote. “Even though I was nationally known, I felt like a computer geek next to her.”

As for Neff, she was not as discreet as she had been with Macaulay Culkin, tweeting after the fact that Shkreli had played her and Anna the leaked tracks from *Tha Carter V*, the delayed Lil Wayne album he’d acquired. Anna was furious, but Neff refused to delete the tweet. “I wanted everybody to know that I heard this album that the world is waiting on! But Anna was pretty mad. She didn’t come down to my desk for maybe three days.”

In the meantime, though, Neff said she had another visitor: Charlie Rosen. Aby Rosen’s sons were generally regarded as pretty-boy trust-fund kids — a few years back, [they made headlines](#) for reportedly racing ATVs over piping-plover nests in the Hamptons — but Neff liked them, and when Charlie stopped by one evening, she dropped that she’d recently been to visit the Park Avenue building that one of the guests, a young woman, was leasing from their father for an arts club.

Rosen looked confused. He didn’t appear to have ever heard of Anna or her project. “What room is she staying in?” he asked. When Neff told him, he looked skeptical. “If my dad has someone buying property from him staying here,” he said, “would she be in a Deluxe or would she be in a suite?”

He had a point. A few days later, Neff broached the subject. “Why did you tell me you’re buying property from Aby but you’re not staying in a suite?” she asked.

Anna looked surprised but answered immediately. “She said, ‘You ever have someone do so many favors for you, you kind of just want to pay them back in silence?’ ”

“*Genius*,” Neff said.

Soon it was April. Spring was poking its head through the gray New York City sidewalks, and the weather was getting warm enough to sip rosé on rooftops, one of Anna’s favorite activities, although the circle she was doing this with, Neff noticed, was smaller than it had been in the past and mainly consisted of herself; [Rachel Williams](#), a photo editor at *Vanity Fair*, and the trainer, who, although she was notably older, had taken a motherly interest in her client. “I know a lot of trust-fund babies, and I was impressed that Anna had something that she wanted to do, instead of, you know, living like a Kardashian,” said the trainer. Plus, she said, Anna seemed lonely. Neff noticed the same thing. “What happened to your friends?” she asked Anna after one night out. “Oh,” Anna said vaguely. “They’re all mad I left *Purple*.”



At a CFDA after-party in 2014. Photo: Matteo

Prandoni/BFA/REX/Shutterstock/Matteo Prandoni/BFA/REX/Shutters

She was too busy for parties, anyway, she said, what with building her business.

It was true that Anna was spending a lot of time working, frowning at her in-box and huffing into the phone. “She was always on the phone with lawyers,” said Neff, who would sort of listen in from the concierge desk. “They were always toning her down. Like, ‘Anna, you’re trying to make something that’s worth this much be worth that much, and that’s just not how it works.’ ”

Back in December, City National had turned down her loan request — a management decision is how Anna framed it — and while the ever-loyal Andy Lance was reaching out to hedge funds and banks for alternate financing, executives at RFR were pressuring her to come up with the money fast, Anna said. If she didn't, they were going to give it to another party, rumored to be the Swedish museum Fotografiska. "How do they even pay for that?" Anna fumed. "It's like two old guys."

In the meantime, Anna was having cash-flow issues of her own. One night, Anna asked Neff to dinner at [Sant Ambroeus](#) in Soho. They were by themselves, which was unusual. Even more unusually, at the end of the meal, Anna's card was declined. "Here," she told the waiter, handing him a list of credit-card numbers. In Neff's admittedly foggy memory, they were in a small book, though it may have been the Notes app on her phone. But she's clear on what happened next. "The waiter went back to his station and began entering the numbers. There were like 12, and I know the guy tried them all," she said. "He was trying it and then shaking his head. And then I started to sweat, because I knew the bill was mine." While the amount — \$286 — was a fraction of what Anna usually spent, it was a lot for Neff, who quietly transferred money from her savings to cover the bill. Doing so made her feel sick, but after all the money Anna had spent on her, she understood it was her turn.

Not long after, Neff's manager called and asked her to address a delicate issue: It seemed 11 Howard didn't have a credit card on file for Anna Delvey. Because the hotel had been so new when she arrived, and because she was staying for such an unusually long time, and because she was a client of Aby Rosen's and a very valued guest, it had agreed to accept a wire transfer. But a month and a half later, no such transfer had arrived, and now Delvey owed the hotel some \$30,000, including charges from Le Coucou that she'd been billing to her room.

Neff wasn't sure what to think. She was sure Anna was good for the money. The day after the Sant Ambroeus debacle, she'd paid her back triple. In cash.

When Anna came by her desk the next day, Neff took her aside and told her that management had said Anna needed to pay her bill. Anna nodded, her eyes inscrutable behind her sunglasses. There was a wire transfer on the way, she said. It should arrive soon. Then, about midway into her shift, Anna came by the desk again and, with a mischievous smile on her face, told Neff to expect a package. When it arrived, Neff opened it to find a case of 1975 Dom Pérignon, with Anna's instructions to distribute it among the staff. Neff hesitated. Gifts, especially of the liquid variety, needed to be approved by management. "They were like, 'How do we look approving this if she hasn't paid us?' So they went after her. 'We need the money or we're locking you out.' "

One morning, Anna showed up to her morning session with the trainer looking visibly upset. "Can we do a life-coaching session?" she pleaded. She was trying to build something, to do something, she went on, and no one was taking her seriously. "They think because I am young, they think I have all this money," she sobbed. "I told them the money would be there soon. I'm having it transferred."

The trainer told her to breathe. "I feel like you are in a little over your head," she offered. "Maybe you just need a break."

Then something miraculous happened. Citibank sent 11 Howard a wire transfer on behalf of Ms. Anna Delvey for \$30,000. Neff called Anna on her cell phone. "Where you at?" she asked. Across the street at Rick Owens, Anna replied. Neff checked the clock: It was her lunch break. When she came through the door of the store, Anna was holding up a T-shirt. "Look what I found," she said, beaming. "It's perfect for you." She was right: The shirt was the exact orangey red of the creepy bathroom scene in *The Shining*, one of Neff's favorite movies, and the signature color of the brand Neff was trying to launch, FilmColours. It was also \$400. "I'd love to buy it for you," Anna said.

A few weeks later, Anna told Neff she was going to Omaha. "I'm going to see Warren Buffett," she announced, grandly. One of her bankers

had gotten her on the list to Berkshire Hathaway's annual investment conference, and she'd decided to bring the executive from Martin Shkreli's hedge fund, who was fun and a friend of his, on the private jet she'd rented to take them there. "I'll be back," she promised Neff.

But there was still a problem with her account at 11 Howard. Despite being repeatedly asked by hotel management, she still hadn't given the hotel a working credit card, and her charges continued to mount. Following through on their warning, hotel employees changed the code on the lock of Anna's room and put her things in storage. Neff texted Anna in Omaha to deliver the bad news.

"How can they do that?" Anna asked indignantly, although if she was truly shocked, it didn't last long. The conference had been great, she said. The best part had happened the very last day, when, having exhausted all the opportunities for luxury Omaha had to offer, Anna and her party had taken a cab driver's suggestion to check out the zoo. They hadn't expected much, but then, while they were riding around on their golf carts, they'd stumbled on a private dinner hosted by Buffett for a slew of VIPs. "Everyone was there," she said. "Like, Bill Gates was there."

For a little while, they'd watched through the glass, then they'd slipped in and mingled among them.





From left: With Tommy Saleh. Photo: Madison McGaw/BFA/REX/Shutterstock
 With *Purple* magazine's Olivier Zahm. Photo: annadlvv/Instagram

When Anna got back to 11 Howard, she made her fury known. She was going to purchase web domains in all of the managers' names, she told Neff, a trick she'd learned from Shkreli: "They're going to pay me one day." Also, she was moving out — as soon as she got back from Morocco. Inspired by Khloé Kardashian, she'd reserved a \$7,000-a-night riad with a private butler at La Mamounia, an opulent resort in Marrakech, and asked Neff if she wanted to join herself, the trainer,

Rachel Williams, and a videographer, who she was hoping would make “a behind-the-scenes documentary” about the process of creating her arts foundation on a vacation. They’d wake up to massages, she said, and spend their days exploring the souk, lounging by the pool. Neff wanted to go, badly. But there was no way the hotel would let her take off eight days. “Just quit,” Anna said airily.

For a day or two, Neff considered it. But her mom told her she had a bad feeling about it. “Nothing in life is free,” she said. So Neff stayed behind, morosely following her friend’s journey on Instagram. “I was pretty jealous,” she said.

As she would find out, the pictures didn’t exactly tell the whole story. Two days in, after coming down with a nasty case of food poisoning, the trainer had gone back to New York early.

About a week later, the trainer got a call from Anna, who was alone at the Four Seasons in Casablanca and hysterical. There was, she sobbed, a problem with her bank. Her credit cards weren’t going through, and the hotel was threatening to call the police. After calming Anna down, the trainer asked to speak to management. “They were like, ‘She is going to be arrested,’ ” she said.

The trainer was torn: On the one hand, this was not her problem. On the other, Anna was her client, her friend, and someone’s daughter. Offering a prayer to the universe, the trainer gave the hotel her credit-card number and, when it failed to go through, made the requisite calls to her bank. When it still failed to go through, she went the extra mile: She called a friend and had her give her credit-card information. When that failed to work, the hotel conceded the problem might be on their end.

Later, the trainer would recognize this as a substantial gift from the Universe. At the time, she promised the hotel in Casablanca that Anna would make them whole. “Trust me,” she told them. “I know she’s good for it. I just spent two days with her in Marrakech.” When Anna came back on the phone, the trainer told her she was booking her a

ticket back to New York. Anna snuffled her thanks. Then she asked for one last favor: "Can you get me first class?" she asked.

A few days later, a silvery Tesla pulled up in front of 11 Howard. Neff, at the concierge desk, felt her cell phone buzz. "Look out the window," said a familiar German accent. The car's futuristic doors slowly raised up to reveal Anna. "I'm here to get my stuff," she said.

Anna was making good on her promise to leave 11 Howard. She was moving downtown to the [Beekman Hotel](#), she told Neff, who watched her drive away in a car that she only later realized someone must have rented to her. Moving didn't stem Anna's mounting troubles. Not only did she owe the hotel, but, over in London, Marc Kremers, the designer she'd hired to do her branding work, was getting antsy: The £16,800 fee Anna had promised would arrive by wire almost a year before had yet to materialize, and now emails to Anna's financial adviser, Peter W. Hennecke, were bouncing back. "Peter passed away last month," Anna replied. "Please refrain from contacting or mentioning any communication with him going forward."

In retrospect, her terseness was understandable. Things were rapidly deteriorating for Anna Delvey in New York. Twenty days into her stay, the Beekman Hotel, having realized it did not have a working credit card on file and having not received the promised wire transfer for her balance of \$11,518.59, locked Anna out of her room and confiscated her belongings. A subsequent two-day stay at the [W Hotel](#) downtown ended in a similar fashion, and by July 5, Anna was effectively homeless, wandering the streets in threadbare Alexander Wang sportswear.

Late one night, she made her way to the trainer's apartment and dialed her from outside. "I'm right near your building," she said. "Do you think we could talk?"

The trainer hesitated: She was in the middle of a date. But there was a desperate note in Anna's voice. She made her way to her lobby, where

she found Anna with tears streaming down her face. "I'm trying to do this thing," she sobbed. "And it's so hard."

Maybe she should call her family, the trainer suggested. She would, Anna replied, but her parents were in Africa. "Do you mind if I crash at your place tonight?" No, the trainer said, she had a date.

"I really just don't want be alone," Anna sniffled. "I might *do something*."

The date hid in the bedroom while the trainer made a bed for her unexpected houseguest and offered her a glass of water.

"Do you have any Pellegrino?" Anna asked. There was one large bottle left. Anna ignored the two glasses placed on the counter and began swilling from the bottle. "I'm so tired," she yawned.

As Anna slept, the trainer's spidey sense began to tingle. "I mean, I'm born and raised in New York," she told me later. "I'm not stupid." She texted Rachel Williams, who told her about what had happened at La Mamounia: Apparently, after the trainer returned to New York, the credit card Anna had used to book the hotel was found to be nonfunctional, and when Anna was unable to produce a new form of payment and a pair of threatening goons appeared in the doorway, the photo editor was forced to put the balance — \$62,000, more than she was paid in a year — on the Amex she sometimes used for work expenses. Anna had promised her a wire transfer, but a month later, all Rachel received was \$5,000, and her excuses had turned "Kafkaesque."

The following morning, the trainer resolved to draw a clear boundary. After lending Anna a clean (and flattering) dress, she sent her on her way with a gratis motivational speech. But when Anna walked out the door, she left her laptop behind. The trainer was having none of it. She deposited the computer at the front desk and texted Anna that she could pick it up there.

That evening, the trainer got a call from her doorman. Anna was in the lobby. He'd told her that the trainer was out, at which point she'd asked for access to her suite. When he refused, Anna had resolved to wait for the trainer to return home.

"Let me know when she goes," the trainer told the doorman.

But hours passed and Anna didn't budge. "They were like, *She's still here. She's texting*," the trainer recalls. "I was like, *Oh my God, I'm a prisoner of my own house*." It wasn't until after midnight that Anna finally left the building.

The relief the trainer felt soon turned into worry. "I started calling the hotels to see where she was staying, and each hotel was like, '*This girl*,' she said.

She found out why later that month, when both the Beekman and the W Hotel filed charges against Anna for theft of services. WANNABE SOCIALITE BUSTED FOR SKIPPING OUT ON PRICEY HOTEL BILLS, blared the headline in the [Post](#), which referenced an incident in which Anna attempted to leave the restaurant at [Le Parker](#) without paying. "Why are you making a big deal about this?" she'd protested to police. "Give me five minutes and I can get a friend to pay."

But no friends arrived. Maybe it was all a misunderstanding, as Anna told Todd Spodek, the criminal attorney she hired to fight the misdemeanor charges. Maybe the poised young woman in the Audrey Hepburn dress who'd cold-called him on his cell phone repeatedly, insisting it was an emergency until he'd agreed to come into his office on a Saturday, really was a wealthy German heiress, he thought, as his 4-year-old pasted *Paw Patrol* stickers up one of Anna's bare arms, and her credit cards had gotten jammed up, or someone had taken away her trust fund. Just in case, Spodek, whose everyday clientele includes grifters, dog-murderers, femme fatales, rapists, and cybercriminals, among other miscreants, had her sign a lien on all of her assets, one that would ensure he got paid. On her way out, Anna asked a favor. "I kind of need a place to stay," she said. Spodek

demurred. The last thing his wife wanted was for him to bring his work home with him.

Anna again got in touch with the trainer, who did not invite her to stay but instead organized an intervention at a nearby restaurant, during which she and Rachel Williams attempted to get answers: about why Anna had done what she'd done, who she really was, if she'd ever planned on paying anyone back. Anna hemmed and hawed and dissembled and prevaricated and, as the women got increasingly angry, allowed two fat tears to roll down her cheeks. "I'll have enough to pay everyone," she sniffled. "Once I get the lease signed ..."

"Anna," the trainer said, summoning her last shred of patience. "*The building has been rented.*"

She held up her iPhone and showed her the headline: FOTOGRAFISKA SIGNS A LEASE FOR ENTIRE 45K SF AT ABY ROSEN'S BUILDING.

"That's fake news," Anna said.





From left: A snapshot from her trip to Ibiza Photo:

annadlvv/InstagramAt the Venice Biennale in 2015 — her ticket bought by friend Michael Xufu Huang.... [more](#)

“Fotografiska really get the building?” sighed the tiny, accented voice after the recording identifying the call as coming from Rikers Island, where Anna Delvey, a.k.a. Anna Sorokin, has been remanded without bail since October 2017.

As it turned out, Anna’s hotel bills were merely the first loose threads in a web of fraudulent activity, one that began to unravel in November 2016, after she submitted documents claiming a net worth of €60 million in Swiss accounts to City National Bank in pursuit of a \$22 million dollar loan. The following month, she submitted the same documents to Fortress in an attempt to secure a \$25 million to \$35 million loan. After that bank asked her for \$100,000 to perform due diligence, she convinced a representative at City National to extend her a \$100,000 line of credit, which she then wired to Fortress. Then, apparently spooked by Fortress’s decision to send representatives to

Switzerland to personally check her assets, she withdrew herself from the process halfway through, wiring the remaining \$55,000 to a Citibank account that she used for “personal expenses ... shopping at Forward by Elyse Walker, Apple, and Net-a-Porter,” according to the New York District Attorney’s office. Then, in April, she deposited \$160,000 worth of bad checks into the same account, managing to withdraw \$70,000 before they were returned, which is how she managed to pay off 11 Howard and, ostensibly, buy Neff’s T-shirt and the domain names of the managers of the hotel. (“They called me down to the office. They said, ‘Neff, did you know about this?’ And I started dying laughing. I thought it was a boss move.”) In May, Anna convinced the company Blade to charter her a \$35,000 jet to Omaha by sending them a forged confirmation for a wire transfer from Deutsche Bank. It might have helped that she had the business card of the CEO, whom she’d met in passing at Soho House but who says he didn’t actually know her at all. Not wanting to leave Anna homeless after their intervention last summer, the trainer and a friend agreed to put Anna up at a hotel for one night, after having the hotel remove the mini-bar and giving strict instructions not to allow her any room service. She subsequently checked in to the [Bowery Hotel](#) for two nights, sending the hotel a receipt for a wire transfer from Deutsche Bank that never came. Rachel Williams, City National, and others also received phony wire-transfer receipts, which a representative of the bank identified as forged. Anna’s “family adviser,” the late Peter W. Hennecke, seems to have been a fictional character; his cell-phone number belonged to a now-defunct burner phone from a supermarket, *New York* found. (A living Peter Hennecke did not return calls for comment.) Later in the summer, with her misdemeanor charges pending, Anna deposited two bad checks into an account at Signature Bank, netting her \$8,200, which is how she managed to take what she said was a “planned trip” to California, where she was arrested outside of Passages in Malibu and brought back to New York to face six counts of grand larceny and attempted grand larceny, in addition to theft of services, according to the indictment. “I like L.A.,” she giggled when I visited her at Rikers this past March. “L.A. in the winter, New York in spring and autumn, and Europe in summer.”

People looked over curiously. “She’s like a unicorn in there,” Todd Spodek, Anna’s lawyer, had told me. “Everyone else is in there for like, stabbing their baby daddy.” He had mentioned that his client was taking incarceration unusually in stride, and indeed, this appeared to be the case.

“This place is not that bad at all actually,” Anna told me, eyes sparkling behind her Céline glasses. “People seem to think it’s horrible, but I see it as like, this sociological experiment.”

She’d made friends, of course. The murderers were the most interesting to her. “There are couple of girls who are here for financial crimes as well,” she told me. “This one girl, she’s been stealing other people’s identities. I didn’t realize it was so *easy*.”

Over the course of three months, I spoke to Anna over the phone and visited her several times, occasionally bringing her copies of *Forbes*, *Fast Company*, and *The Wall Street Journal* at her request. Clad in a beige jumpsuit, her \$800 highlights faded and her \$400 eyelash extensions long fallen away, she looked like a normal 27-year-old girl, which is what she is.

Anna Sorokin was born in Russia in 1991, and moved to Germany in 2007, when she was 16, with her younger brother and her parents, who, after being independently tracked down by and speaking with *New York*, asked to remain anonymous, as news of their daughters arrest has not yet reached the small rural community where they live.

Anna attended high school in Eschweiler, a small working-class town 60 kilometers outside Cologne, near the Belgian and Dutch border. Her classmates remember her as quiet, with an unwieldy command of German. Her father had worked as a truck driver and later as an executive at a transport company until it became insolvent in 2013, whereupon he opened a heating-and-cooling business specializing in energy-efficient devices. Anna’s father was circumspect about the family’s finances, possibly out of a not-unreasonable fear of being held responsible for his daughter’s debts, which it was suggested to

New York multiple times are larger and more wide-ranging than officially documented. “She screwed basically everyone,” said the acquaintance in Berlin, who passed on the names of several individuals who were said to have had amounts large and small borrowed or stolen but were too embarrassed to come forward. (Also paranoid: “I heard she commissions these stories,” I was told more than once, after I reached out to alleged victims. “They’re *strategic leaks*.”)

In any case, according to Anna’s father: “Until now, we have never heard of any trust fund.”

That said, he went on, the family did support her to an extent after Anna graduated from high school in 2011. She moved first to London, where she attended Central Saint Martins College, then she dropped out and returned to Berlin, where she interned in the fashion department of a public-relations firm before relocating to Paris, where she landed a coveted internship at *Purple* magazine and became Anna Delvey. Her parents, who say they do not recognize the surname, told *New York*: “We always paid for her accommodations, her rent, and other matters. She assured us these costs were the best investment. If ever she needed something more at one point or another, it didn’t matter. The future was always bright.”

Anna, in jail, told me: “My parents had high expectations. They always trusted me with my decision-making. I guess they regret it now.”

Over the course of our conversations, Anna never admitted any guilt, although she did say she felt bad about what happened with Rachel Williams. “I am very upset that things went that way and I didn’t mean for it to happen,” she said. “But I really can’t do anything about it, being in here.”

She expressed frustration about not being able to bail herself out. “If they were doubting — ‘Oh, she can’t pay for anything’ — why not give me bail and see?” she challenged. “If I was such a fraud, it would be such an easy resolution. *Will she bail herself out?*”

She was frustrated with the New York *Post*'s characterization of her as a "wannabe socialite" — "I was *never* trying to be a socialite," she pointed out. "I had dinners, but they were *work* dinners. I wanted to be taken seriously" — and the District Attorney's portrayal of her as, as Anna put it, "a greedy idiot" who had committed a kind of harebrained Ponzi scheme in order to go shopping. "If I really wanted the money, I would have better and faster ways to get some," she grouched. "Resilience is hard to come by, but not capital."

She seemed most interested in expressing that her plans to create the Anna Delvey Foundation were real. She'd had all of those conversations and meetings and sent all of those emails and commissioned those materials because she thought it was *actually going to happen*. "I had what I thought was a great team around me, and I was having fun," she said. Sure, she said, she might have done a few things wrong. "But that doesn't diminish the hundred things I did right."

Maybe it could have happened. In this city, where enormous amounts of invisible money trade hands every day, where glass towers are built on paperwork promises, why not? If Aby Rosen, the son of Holocaust survivors, could come to New York and fill skyscrapers full of art, if the Kardashians could build a billion-dollar empire out of literally nothing, if a movie star like Dakota Johnson could sculpt her ass so that it becomes the anchor of a major franchise, why couldn't Anna Delvey? During the course of my reporting, people kept asking: Why this girl? She wasn't superhot, they pointed out, or super-charming; she wasn't even very nice. How did she manage to convince an enormous amount of cool, successful people that she was something she clearly was not? Watching the Rikers guard shove *Fast Company* into a manila envelope, I realized what Anna had in common with the people she'd been studying in the pages of that magazine: She saw something others didn't. Anna looked at the soul of New York and recognized that if you distract people with shiny objects, with large wads of cash, with the indicia of wealth, if you show them the money,

they will be virtually unable to see anything else. And the thing was: It was so *easy*.

“Money, like, there’s an unlimited amount of capital in the world, you know?” Anna said to me at one point. “But there’s limited amounts of people who are *talented*.”

Additional reporting by Austin Davis and Naima Wolfspurger in Germany.

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“She Paid for Everything”: How a Fake Heiress Made My \$62,000 Disappear

She walked into my life in Gucci sandals and Céline glasses, and showed me a glamorous, frictionless world of hotel living and Le Coucou dinners and infrared saunas and Moroccan vacations. And then she made my \$62,000 disappear.

April 13, 2018



Anna, in Marrakech's medina on May 16, 2017. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY BY RACHEL DELOACHE WILLIAMS

According to my closest friends and various suspect Internet sources, turning 29 on January 29, 2017 marked my golden birthday. At the time, I wasn't sure what that meant, but I had a gut feeling about my 30th year: it was going to be special; it was going to be good.

It was a total disaster.

It began with Anna. In her signature black athleisure wear and oversize Céline sunglasses, she sat beside me in the S.U.V., pecking at her phone. Seemingly everything she owned was packed into

Rimowa suitcases and stacked in the trunk, just behind our heads. We were running late. Anna was always late. Our S.U.V. hummed along the cobblestones of Crosby Street as we drove from 11 Howard, the hotel Anna had called home for three months, to the Mercer, the hotel Anna planned to move into when we got back from our trip. The bellhops at the Mercer helped us to off-load her bags (all but one), and they checked them away to await Anna's return. Our errand complete, we climbed back into the car and set off for J.F.K. two hours before our flight: we were Marrakech-bound.



Anna, taking an iPhone photo during a day-trip to Kasbah Tamadot, Sir Richard Branson's resort in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains. Anna returned for a stay at Kasbah Tamadot after leaving La Mamounia. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RACHEL DELOACHE WILLIAMS

I first met Anna the year prior, in early 2016, at Happy Ending, a restaurant-lounge on Broome Street with a bistro on the ground floor, and a popular nightclub past the bouncer one flight down. I was with friends in the lounge downstairs. It was a group that I saw almost exclusively on nights out, fashion friends, whom I'd met since moving to the city in 2010. We walked in as the space was kicking into gear, not empty but not crowded. Young men and women made laps through machine-pumped fog, scouting for action and a place to settle in, as they sipped their vodka soda through plastic black straws.

We made our way to the right and back, where the fog and people were denser and the music was louder.

Watch Now:

I can't remember which arrived first: the expectant bucket of ice and stack of glasses, or "**Anna Delvey**"—but I knew that she had appeared and with her came bottle service. She was a stranger to me, and yet not unknown. I'd seen her on Instagram, smiling at events, drinking at parties, oftentimes alongside my own friends and acquaintances. I'd seen that @annadelvey (since changed to @annadlvv) had 40K followers.

The new arrival, in a clingy black dress and flat Gucci sandals, slid into the banquette. She had a cherubic face with oversize blue eyes and pouty lips. Her features and proportions were classical—almost anachronistic—with a roundness that would suit Ingres or John Currin. She greeted me and her ambiguously accented voice was unexpectedly high-pitched.

Pleasantries led to discussion of how Anna first came into our friend group. She said she had interned for *Purple* magazine, in Paris (I'd seen her in photos with the magazine's editor-in-chief), and evidently traveled in similar social circles. It was the quintessential nice-to-meet-you-in-New York conversation: hellos, exchange of niceties, how do you know X, what do you do for work?

"I work at *Vanity Fair*," I told her. The usual dialogue ensued: "in the photo department," I elaborated. "Yes, I love it. I've been there for six years." She was attentive and engaged. She ordered another bottle of vodka. She picked up the tab.

Not long after we first met, I was invited to join Anna and a mutual friend for dinner at Harry's, a steakhouse downtown, not far from my office. The vibe at Harry's was distinctly masculine, fussy but not frilly, with leather seating and wood-paneled walls. Anna was there when I arrived, and the friend came a few minutes later. We were shown to our table, and my company ordered oysters and a round of espresso

martinis. Conversation went along, as did the cocktails. I'd never had an espresso martini, but it went down just fine.

Anna told us huffily that she'd spent the day in meetings with lawyers. "What for?" I asked. She lit up. She was hard at work on her art foundation—a "dynamic visual-arts center dedicated to contemporary art," she explained, referring vaguely to a family trust. She planned to lease the historic Church Missions House, a building on Park Avenue South and 22nd Street, to house a night lounge, bar, art galleries, studio space, restaurants, and a members-only club. In my line of work, I had often encountered ambitious, well-off individuals, so though her undertaking sounded grand in scale and promising in theory, my sincere enthusiasm hardly outweighed a measured skepticism.

For the rest of 2016, I saw Anna every few weekends. As a visiting German citizen, she'd explained, she didn't have a full-time residence. She was living in the Standard, High Line, not far from my small apartment in Manhattan's West Village. Anna intrigued me, and she seemed eager to be friends. I was flattered. I saw her on adventure-filled nights out, for drinks and sometimes dinner, usually with a group, but occasionally just the two of us. Towards autumn of that same year, Anna told me she was returning to Cologne, where she said she was from, just before the expiration of her visa.

Nearly half a year later, she came back.

Anna photographed at Paris Fashion Week after party in NYC on September 26, 2013.

By Joe Schildhorn/BFA/REX/Shutterstock.

On Saturday, May 13, 2017, we landed in Marrakech. Our hotel sent a V.I.P. service to greet us at the airport. We were escorted through Customs and taken to two awaiting Land Rovers. After a 10-minute drive, we pulled up to a palatial compound and entered through its gates. At the front entrance, we were welcomed by a host of men wearing fez caps and traditional Moroccan attire. We had arrived at

our singularly opulent destination. Miss Delvey, our host, opted for a tour of the grounds for her and her guests. We proceeded directly, not having any need for keys or a traditional check-in procedure, since our villa was staffed with a full-time butler and, according to our host, all billing had been settled in advance.

The vacation was Anna's idea. She again needed to leave the States in order to reset her ESTA visa, she said. Instead of returning home to Germany, she suggested we take a trip somewhere warm. It had been a long time since my last vacation. I happily agreed that we should explore options, thinking we'd find off-season fares to the Dominican Republic or Turks and Caicos. Anna suggested Marrakech; she'd always wanted to go. She picked La Mamounia, a five-star luxury resort ranked among the best in the world, and knowing that her selection was cost-prohibitive for my budget, she nonchalantly offered to cover my flights, the hotel, and expenses. She reserved a \$7,000/night private riad, a traditional Moroccan villa with an interior courtyard, three bedrooms, and a pool, and forwarded me the confirmation e-mail. Due to a seemingly minor snafu, I'd put the plane tickets on my American Express card, with Anna promising to reimburse me promptly. Since I did this all the time for work, I didn't give it a second thought.

Anna also invited a personal trainer, along with a friend of mine—a photographer—whom, at a dinner the week before our trip, Anna had asked to come as a documentarian, someone to capture video. She was thinking of making a documentary about the creation of her art foundation, and she wanted to experience what it felt like to have someone around with a camera. Plus, it'd be fun to have video from the trip, she said. I thought this was a bit ridiculous, but also entertaining, and why not? The four of us stayed in the private villa together. Anna and I shared the largest room.

We spent our first day and a half exploring all that La Mamounia had to offer. We roamed the gardens, relaxed in the hammam, swam in our villa's private pool, took a tour of the wine cellar, and ate dinner to the intoxicating rhythms of live Moroccan music, before capping our

night with cocktails in the jazzy Churchill bar. In the morning, Anna arranged for a private tennis lesson. We met her afterward for breakfast at the poolside buffet. Between adventures, our butler appeared, as if by magic, with fresh watermelon and chilled bottles of rosé.

Anna was no stranger to decadence. When she returned to N.Y.C. in early 2017, after months away, she checked into 11 Howard, a trendy hotel in SoHo. Her routine dinner spot became Le Coucou, winner of the James Beard Award for best new restaurant that same year, which was on the ground level of her hotel. Buckwheat fried Montauk eel to start and then the bourride: her dish of choice. She befriended the staff, and even the chef, **Daniel Rose**, who, upon her request, obligingly made off-the-menu bouillabaisse just for her. Dinners were accompanied by abundant white wine.

Her days were spent at meetings and on phone calls, often in her hotel. She regularly went to **Christian Zamora** for \$400 full eyelash extensions, or \$140 touch-ups here and there. She went to Marie Robinson Salon for color, **Sally Hershberger** for cuts. She toured multi-million-dollar apartments with over-eager realtors and chartered a private plane for a weekend trip to Berkshire Hathaway's annual shareholders meeting in Omaha. All things in excess: she shopped, ate, and drank. Usually wearing a Supreme brand hoodie, workout pants, and sneakers, she embodied a lazy sort of luxury.

Anna checked into 11 Howard on a Sunday in February and that same day invited me to lunch. She'd texted me occasionally while she'd been gone, excited to get back and eager to catch up. I wondered if she kept in touch with other friends that way. She had a directness that could be off-putting and a sort of comical overconfidence that I found equal parts abhorrent and amusing. She isolated herself, and I felt privileged to be one of the few people whom she liked and trusted. Through past experiences, both personal and professional, I was casually accustomed to the lifestyle and quirks of moneyed people, though I had no trust fund or savings of my own. Her world

wasn't foreign to me—I was comfortable there—and I was pleased that she could tell, that she accepted me as someone who “got it.”

I met her at Mamo, on West Broadway. Anna had settled into the L-shaped booth closest to the door. Above her hung an oversize illustration of Lino Ventura and **Jean-Paul Belmondo**, both holding guns, floating above a dark cityscape. “ASFALTO CHE SCOTTA,” it read, in caps-locked Italian. She had come directly from the Apple Store, where she'd purchased a new laptop and two new iPhones—one for her international number and one for a new local number, she said. She ordered a Bellini, and I followed her lead.

When we finally left, it was almost five o'clock. We walked towards Anna's hotel and she invited me in for a drink. We passed through 11 Howard's modern lobby, heading straight for the steel spiral staircase to the left, which swooped twice around a thick column, rising to the floor above. On the second level, we entered a large living room called the Library.

The room's design had distinctly Scandinavian overtones. My eyes scanned the setup and paused on a photograph that hung in a frame across from the concierge desk, a black-and-white image of an empty theater—part of a series by Japanese photographer **Hiroshi Sugimoto**. Light emanated from a seemingly blank, rectangular movie screen, casting its glow out from the center of the composition onto the empty stage, seats, and theater. Sugimoto used a large-format camera and set his exposure to be the full length of a film, hoping to capture a movie's thousands of still frames within a single image. The result was otherworldly. Looking at his work always reminded me of Shakespeare, a play within a play. It captured kinetic energy, portentous and alive with emotion and light. The viewing experience was meta and inverted: I was the audience, looking into an empty theater, beneath a blank screen. Anything was possible, or maybe it'd already happened. Maybe it was all already there.

After that day in February, Anna and I became fast friends. The world was charmed when she was around—the normal rules didn't seem to

apply. Her lifestyle was full of convenience, and its easy materialism was seductive. She began seeing a personal trainer and invited me to join. The sessions were her treat, as she generously insisted that working out was more fun with a friend. We went as frequently as three or four times a week, often ending our sessions with a visit to the infrared sauna.

I saw Anna most mornings. During the day, she'd text me frequently. After work, I'd stop by 11 Howard on my walk home. We'd regularly visit the Library for wine before going downstairs to Le Coucou for late dinners.

Anna did most of the talking. She held court, having befriended the hotel staff and servers, with me as her trusted adviser and loyal confidante. She would tell me about her meetings with restaurateurs, hedge-fund managers, lawyers, and bankers—and her frustration over delays with the lease signing. (She was set on the Church Missions House.) She mused about chefs she'd like to bring in, artists she esteemed, exhibitions that were opening. She was savvy. I felt a mixture of pity and admiration for Anna. She didn't have many friends, and she wasn't close with her family. She said that her relationship with her parents felt rooted more in business than in love. But she was strong. Her impulsivity and a sort of tactlessness had caused a rift between Anna and the friends through whom I'd met her, but I felt that I understood her and would be there for her when others were not.

Anna was a character. Her default setting was haughty, but she didn't take herself too seriously. She was quirky and erratic. She acted with the entitlement and impulsivity of a once spoiled, seldom disciplined child—offset by a tendency to befriend workers rather than management, and to let slip the occasional comment suggesting a deeper empathy. ("It's a lot of responsibility to have people working for you; people have families to feed. That's no joke.") In the male-dominated business world, she was unapologetically ambitious and I liked this about her.

She was audacious where I was reserved, and irreverent where I was polite. We balanced each other: I normalized her eccentric behavior, as she challenged my sense of propriety and dared me to have fun. As an added bonus, she paid for everything.

It was late on Monday afternoon, after almost two full days in La Mamounia's walled palace. It was time to venture out. Anna wanted two things: piles of spices worthy of an Instagram photo and a place to buy some Moroccan kaftans. La Mamounia's concierge arranged everything: within minutes we had a tour guide and set off with a car and driver. Our van came to a stop and we stepped out one by one, fresh from our sheltered resort life, into the dusty warmth of the medina's mysterious maze.

"Can you make this dress, but with black linen?" Anna asked of a woman in Maison Du Kaftan. Before the woman could reply, Anna continued, "I'll take one in black and one in white linen and, Rachel, I'd love to get one for you." I scanned the store's racks as Anna tried on a bright red jumpsuit and a range of gauzy sheer dresses. I tried on a few things but, wary of the iffy fabric content and high prices, I soon joined the videographer and trainer in the shop's seating area for glasses of mint tea. Anna went to pay. Her debit card was declined.

"Did you tell your banks that you were traveling?" I asked. "No," was her reply. Then I wasn't surprised that such a purchase would be flagged. Anna asked to borrow money, promising to reimburse me the following week. I agreed, careful to keep track of the receipt. We wandered the medina until dusk. Back in the van, we went directly to La Sultana for dinner. I paid for that, too, adding it to my "tab."

On Tuesday, we were walking through La Mamounia's lobby, leaving for a visit to the Jardin Majorelle, when a hotel employee waved Anna to a stop. "Miss Delvey, may we speak with you?" he said, as he tactfully pulled her aside. "Is everything O.K.?" I asked, when she rejoined the group. "Yes," Anna reassured me. "I just need to call my bank."

The next morning, I, too, was stopped as I passed through the lobby: "Miss Williams, have you seen Miss Delvey?" I sent Anna to the concierge. She was agitated by the inconvenience. You could always tell when Anna was agitated: she made almost comical huffy noises ("ugh, why!") and typed furiously on her phone. She left the villa and came back shortly after, ostensibly relieved that the situation was being resolved.

We set off on a day trip to the Atlas Mountains and returned to Marrakech after dinner that same evening, re-entering La Mamounia through the main lobby. Two men stepped forward as Anna approached. They pulled her aside and she sat down to make a call, as the videographer and I lingered awkwardly to the side. (The trainer was sick in bed for the second day in a row.) As we waited, an employee mentioned that someone had been fired because of the trouble with our villa's payment. A functioning credit card should have been on file before we'd arrived, he explained.

The men followed us back to our villa, as Anna spoke clipped phrases into her phone. They stood ominously on the edge of our living room. I offered them chairs, but they declined. I offered them water, smilingly trying to diffuse the tension. They declined. Anna sat in front of them, intensely focused. I excused myself, feeling the embarrassment of the situation, and thinking it best to give Anna some privacy since there was nothing I could do to help.

In the morning, I awoke to a text message from the trainer. Still feeling sick, she wanted to go home and needed help making arrangements. She gave me her credit card and I booked a flight. As she packed, I called the concierge to request a car to take her to the airport.

Instead of the car, five minutes later the two men from the night prior reappeared in the villa. I left the trainer and went to wake up Anna. She indignantly resumed her post in the living room, cell phone back to her ear. I called the concierge again. "Hi, can you please send that car? No, we're not all leaving; we have one sick traveler who needs to

make her flight. The rest of us are staying." A car came and the trainer left. The rest of us sat in gridlock.

Anna was no longer making calls. She sat there blankly. The men insisted that a functioning card was needed for a block on the reservation's balance only, not to be charged for the final bill, which could be settled later. First Anna, and then the men, pressured me to put down my credit card for that block while Anna sorted out the situation with her bank. I was stuck. I had exactly \$410.03 in my checking account. I had no alternate transportation from the hotel. I wanted to go home. And most importantly, I was told that my card would not be charged.

Later that day, when American Express flagged my account for irregular spending activity, I went to the concierge desk to see why the "block" was registering as actual charges. I was told that credits for the same totals would appear in my account. I've been to many hotels and was familiar with that process: the way, when you check in, your card is often pre-charged for some amount that's later credited back to your account. I rationalized this as the same thing. At least I knew Anna was good for the money. I'd seen her spend so much of it. You learn a lot about someone when you travel together.

I left Marrakech early the next day, before Anna and the videographer. As I arrived at my destination, I received a text from Anna promising that she'd forward a wire confirmation as soon as possible. She'd checked out of La Mamounia and taken a car to Sir **Richard Branson's** Kasbah Tamadot, a destination hotel in the foothills of Morocco's High Atlas mountains. "I'll wire you 70,000 [U.S.D.], that way everything's covered," she said. I suddenly understood that she intended to leave the hotel charges on my account, to add that amount to the total she owed me from expenses outside the hotel. The balance was more money than I net annually. It suddenly felt like a foregone conclusion.

Anna stayed in touch daily, but in the following week I did not receive the wire as I'd been promised. I attributed her delay to disorganization

and a failure to grasp the urgency of my situation. I was frustrated, but not surprised by her ineptitude, and I assumed the international wire transfer was just taking longer than expected.

Her texts became increasingly Kafka-esque: assurances of incoming reimbursements through varying methods of payment that never materialized. She spun a web of promises that grew increasingly self-referential and complex. I thought there was an issue with her trust-fund disbursement, and I resented her unwillingness to be straight with me.

When she got back to New York, she checked into the Beekman. (The Mercer was sold out, she said.) It was comforting to know that she was physically nearby, not far from my office in the World Trade Center. At least I knew where to find her. Bafflingly, she invited me to join our usual visits to the personal trainer. I declined.

Seeking reimbursement from Anna became a full-time job. Stress consumed my sleep and fueled my days. My co-workers saw me unravel. I came to the office looking pale and undone.

At last, a month after I'd left Marrakech, Anna claimed to have picked up a cashier's check. She had been upstate dealing with a "work emergency," but had made it to a bank before closing time and would deposit the check into my account in the morning, she said. This news should have incited a wave of relief, but instead, I remained skeptical.

I showed up at the Beekman unannounced the next morning and rang Anna from the concierge desk. She answered, sounding groggy. "Hey, I'm here. What's your room number?" I asked.

Her room was a mess. Papers were everywhere. Her suitcases lay open and overflowing. Her black linen dress from Morocco hung in dry cleaner's plastic from an open closet door. "Where's the check?" I questioned, trying to make the transaction simple. She shuffled through piles of papers, looked under clothing, and dumped out various bags before claiming to have left the check in the Tesla she'd

driven back from upstate. Of course, it couldn't be easy. Of course, there was a problem.

She called the Tesla dealership, and then her lawyer's office. ("He must have it," she said). I refused to leave. Anna said the check would be dropped off, so I waited. I went with her to Le Coucou, where she met with a different lawyer and a private-wealth manager. I followed her back to the lobby in the Beekman, where she ordered oysters and a bottle of white wine. I sat in silence, sending work e-mails from my phone, largely ignoring Anna, but keeping a watchful eye and asking periodically for an update. To prove a point, I stayed until 11 P.M. I left angrily, telling her I'd be back at 8 A.M. so we could go together to the bank. She agreed. "I hope you had fun, at least," she chirped, with an impish grin. "No, this was not fun. This is not O.K.," I stammered incredulously.

The next morning, I arrived at the hotel on time. Anna was not there. I was livid. Her overt evasion confirmed what I had feared most: Anna was not to be trusted.

Finally—why had it taken me so long?—I began to investigate on my own. I reached out to the friends through whom I'd met Anna and was referred to a guy who'd once loaned her money. He was German, like she was, and had known Anna since she lived in Paris. He told me a story that was alarming and reassuring in equal measure. He said that, after weeks of pestering, he had gotten his money back by threatening to involve the authorities, since Anna always maintained she was afraid of being deported. "Her dad is a Russian billionaire," he said. "He brings oil from Russia to Germany." The details obviously came directly from Anna, but they didn't add up—Anna had told me that her parents worked in solar energy. He said that Anna had told him that she received around \$30,000 at the start of each month and blew through it, and that she stood to inherit \$10 million on her 26th birthday, the previous January, but because she was such a mess, her dad had arranged for the inheritance to be delayed until September of the same year, just a few months away.

I knew that something wasn't right. I searched for a way to reach Anna's parents, but could find none. On the week of July Fourth, while I was in South Carolina with my family (who knew nothing of the situation), I received a text from the trainer. She told me that Anna was asleep on her couch. Did she not have another place to stay? Two days later, Anna texted me, too, asking if she could stay at my apartment. I said no.

A day later, Anna called me crying. "I can't be alone right now," she pleaded. I offered to meet at her hotel. "I had to check out. Can I come to you?" she asked. I said no and hung up. Then my conscience got the better of me. I called her back: "You can come by, but you can't stay here." She was at my door within the hour. I didn't have the energy to engage, so I said very little. My tiny studio apartment was in terrible disarray, the physical manifestation of my mental state: piles of papers, boxes, clothing, and stuff. I apologized for the mess. "You don't need to apologize to me," she said. She was right. I made a conscious decision to turn the proverbial cheek. I ordered two salads and put on *Bridget Jones's Diary*. When she asked to sleep on my couch, I was hardly surprised.

Even this far down the road, I tried to maintain an optimistic view of the situation: my friend had run into an unimaginable spell of bad luck; any day it would be resolved. This optimism was one of my defining characteristics, an Achilles' heel. It's what allowed me to befriend Anna in the first place: a willful suspension of judgment, an earnest filtration that looked for the best in others and excused the worst.

Anna could certainly be the worst. At one point, before we left for Morocco, the management at 11 Howard asked Anna to pay for her reservations in advance. She was infuriated by this irregular treatment: "No one else must do that," she protested. As retribution, she made note of the general managers' names. Once she checked out, she claimed, she purchased the corresponding Internet domains. She then sent them e-mails to show what she'd done. "I'll sell them back for a million dollars each," she told me. This was a trick she'd

learned from **Martin Shkreli**—whom she admired, and even claimed to have met with once or twice. I tried to rationalize her affinity for his antics, even as it made my stomach turn. I'm left to grapple with that in the aftermath.

On the first day of August, I walked into a police station in Chinatown. I'd had enough. I told my story to a lieutenant. He fixated on the Morocco aspect of the situation and told me there was an insurmountable jurisdictional issue. "But with your face," he said, "you could start a GoFundMe page to get your money back." He suggested I try the civil court. I went outside and sobbed.

When I stopped crying, I went straight to the nearby civil court. I found a help center and spoke to a woman through an institutional plexiglas divider before a mousey man in khakis walked me over to his cubicle. I relayed my tale of woe. "Well, gee, I'm kind of jealous that you got to go to Morocco," he responded. He tried to help by offering pamphlets on pro-bono lawyers and artist-defense leagues, but the money involved surpassed the financial limit dealt with in civil court, he told me. I left feeling distraught.

And then came the decisive moment: an episode that unfolded like the climax of a staged drama. Anna reappeared in the lobby of the trainer's apartment, just as I left civil court. The trainer called me immediately and we decided to confront Anna together. The trainer also invited a friend of hers—someone she thought would be helpful—and the four of us convened at the Frying Pan, a bar on the West Side Highway. Anna was crying behind oversize sunglasses. She was wearing the same dress that she'd worn for weeks (a loan from her night's stay in the trainer's apartment). "Have you seen what they're saying about me?" she whined. Apparently, the night before, an article had come out in the *New York Post* calling Anna a "wannabe socialite." She'd stiffed the Beekman for her stay. Her belongings had been detained. She was being charged with several misdemeanor offenses, including an embarrassing dine-and-dash incident.

At an outdoor table, surrounded by young professionals boisterously enjoying after-work drinks, the four of us existed in our own little world. “We are here because we want to help you,” the trainer began. “But to do that, we need to hear some truth from you, Anna.” It was the same old song and dance: Anna stuck to her story, claiming that all she’d said was true; nothing was her fault. Anna sat across from me as the women relentlessly pressed for answers, for names, for a way to reach Anna’s family. I said very little as I watched. I seemed to float outside of my body, while tears ran down my cheeks. Against the raised voices and direct accusations, Anna’s face assumed an unsettling blankness. Her eyes were empty. I suddenly realized that I didn’t know her at all. With this epiphany came a sort of release and a strange calmness. I understood the women’s anger and disbelief; I’d had those feelings for months. But I had come through to the other side, and I knew that there was only one answer.

The next day, I e-mailed the New York County District Attorney’s Office, linking to an article about Anna: “I think this girl is a con artist,” I wrote. An hour later, my cell phone rang. The caller I.D. read “United States.” I picked up the phone, as I stepped away from my desk. “We think you’re right,” a voice said.

An assistant district attorney confirmed that **Anna Sorokin** (a.k.a. Anna Delvey) was the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation.

Anna photographed in Manhattan Supreme Court where she plead not guilty to charges including grand larceny and theft on October 25, 2017.

Photograph by Steven Hirsch.

On the last Wednesday in August, I awkwardly lowered my tote bag to the floor, resting it against the wall, before turning to face the roomful of Manhattan jurors, nearly two dozen faces dotting curved tiers of seating that reminded me of a college classroom. I assumed the position of a professor, though I was hardly fit to teach the group—I, the dupe, the dope, the sorry case. And then I recalled one class I might now be qualified to teach, or at least I could be a guest lecturer,

the only one for which I'd received an A+ during my time at Kenyon: "The Confidence Game in America," an advanced-level English course taught by **Lewis Hyde**, who'd written a book all about tricksters (*Trickster Makes This World*). Well, at least the irony was gratifying.

I stood behind a small wooden table in the front of the room. The court reporter sat to my left, and an assistant district attorney stood at a podium to my right, next to a projector. The foreperson, a girl about my age, sat in the center of the back row and asked from above, "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?" I did.

I was the victim of alleged grand larceny in the second degree—grand larceny by deception. "How much do you make in a year?" the assistant D.A. asked me. Beside her, on the wall behind my chair, was a projector screen, on which shone a spreadsheet of all the charges on my accounts related to Morocco. The bolded total at the bottom of the display read \$62,109.29. "Would you have gone on this trip if you knew that you'd be the one paying?" the attorney continued. The idea was laughable, even while I cried.

I wasn't the only one who'd believed in Anna. At the grand-jury hearing, Anna was indicted on six felony charges and one misdemeanor charge. I realized the scope of her purported deceit as I later read the indictment. She was accused of falsifying documents from international banks showing accounts abroad with a total balance of approximately €60 million. According to a press release from the New York County District Attorney's Office announcing the indictment, in late 2016, she took these documents to City National Bank in an attempt to secure a \$22 million loan for the creation of her art foundation and private club. When City National Bank denied the loan, she showed the same documents to Fortress Investment Group in Midtown. Fortress agreed to consider the loan if Anna provided \$100,000 to cover legal and due-diligence expenses.

On January 12, 2017, almost a month before she returned to New York, Anna secured a \$100,000 loan from City National Bank by

convincing a bank representative to let her overdraft her account. She allegedly promised the bank that she would wire the funds shortly to cover the overdraft (a familiar tune). She gave the borrowed money to Fortress.

In February, when Anna re-entered my life, Fortress had used approximately \$45,000 of Anna's \$100,000 deposit and was attempting to verify her assets to complete the loan. At that point, Anna backed out. She told me that her father had gotten wind of the deal and didn't like the terms. She withdrew herself from consideration and kept the remaining \$55,000 from the City National Bank loan, which Fortress had returned. Apparently, that's how she paid for her lifestyle: 11 Howard, the dinners, personal-training sessions, and shopping.

Between April 7 and April 11, Anna allegedly deposited \$160,000 in bad checks into her Citibank account and transferred \$70,000 from the account before the checks bounced. She never paid Blade for the \$35,000 private plane she had chartered to Omaha in May. In August, she opened a bank account with Signature Bank and, according to the indictment, deposited \$15,000 in bad checks. She withdrew approximately \$8,200 in cash before the account was closed. She was, allegedly, check-kiting.

The reality of Anna's behind-the-scenes dealings, these figures flying from one account to another, remains dizzying to this day—that she was allegedly orchestrating such elaborate schemes while maintaining a believable, surface cool, wielding her debit cards to pay for dinners, workouts, beauty products, and spa treatments. She conjured a glittering, frictionless city—whatever one wanted would be bought, wherever one wanted to go was a cab ride or plane trip away. The audacity of her performance sold itself, until it collapsed under the weight of its own ambition. It's a part of why I believed her—and continued to believe her: who would think to make up such an elaborate tale, and carry on like this for so long? Who was she? How do you know who anyone is, really? Back on June 9, Anna sent me \$5,000 via PayPal. I thought she was stalling, but this gesture tugged

at me. Knowing what I know now, why did she give me anything at all? Surely, she would have paid me the full amount if she could have, right?

Anna was scheduled to appear in court on September 5, for the misdemeanors that had come out in the news, including her allegedly stolen stay at the Beekman, but she never appeared. I resumed communication with her via text message, not letting on that anything had changed. She had gone to the West Coast and was checked into a rehab in Malibu. In early October, when I was in Beverly Hills for V.F.'s annual New Establishment Summit, Anna and I arranged to have lunch. She never made it. She was arrested in Los Angeles on October 3 and arraigned in a Manhattan court on October 26. She is currently being held without bail on Rikers Island.

Contacted for this article, Anna's attorney, **Todd Spodek**, had a much more pedestrian view of matters concerning Anna. "The burden rests squarely with a lender to conduct the appropriate due diligence before extending credit of any type," he wrote, "and to document the terms of the loan. This is a civil matter, and the appropriate recourse for Ms. Williams is to sue Ms. Sorokin for defaulting on a loan, not to initiate criminal charges. I submit that Ms. Williams does not have an iota of proof to support any agreement, of any type, whatsoever."

Anna told me once that her plans were either going to work out, or all go horribly wrong. Now I see what she meant. It was a magic trick—I'm embarrassed to say that I was one of the props, and the audience, too. Anna's was a beautiful dream of New York, like one of those nights that never seems to end. And then the bill arrives.

CORRECTION: An earlier version of this story misidentified the grand-jury hearing at which Anna Sorokin was indicted. It was a hearing, not a trial.



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EXCLUSIVE: 'Fake heiress' Anna Sorokin says her prison sentence was 'a huge waste of time'

Jacob Shamsian Feb 15, 2021, 1:44 AM



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Anna Sorokin, who claimed to be a German heiress named Anna Delvey, during her trial in April 2019. Mary

Altaffer/AP

In her first post-prison interview, Anna Sorokin — AKA Anna Delvey — says being behind bars was "a huge waste of time."

She's now working on "Anna Delvey TV" to take back control of her narrative, as well as a memoir about prison.

She also isn't dwelling on the past: "I'm just trying to fix things and move on."

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Sorokin — who also goes by Anna Delvey — became famous in 2018, following stories in [Vanity Fair](#) and [New York magazine](#) about her living a lavish lifestyle and grifting her way through Manhattan's socialite scene while posing as a German heiress with a \$60 million trust fund. The New York magazine story is [now turning into a Netflix limited series](#) produced by Shonda Rhimes, with "Ozark" star Julia Garner playing Sorokin.

After using her false identity to attempt to obtain loans from financial institutions, Sorokin was arrested on larceny charges in 2017 and sent to Rikers Island to await trial. She was [convicted on most of the charges in 2019](#) and sent to Albion Correctional Facility in upstate New York.

Now out on parole for good behavior, she's been keeping busy. Sorokin has [created a new Twitter account](#), [published an open letter to Harvey Weinstein](#), and [has posted on Instagram about a new project called Anna Delvey TV](#), an attempt to wrest the public narrative about her life back under her control.

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she said. Her attorney Audrey A. Thomas [previously told Insider](#) that while Sorokin

may have owed money on a civil level, her actions didn't rise to the level of criminal

may have owed money on a civil level, her actions didn't rise to the level of criminal conduct. The Manhattan District Attorney's office didn't immediately respond to Insider's request for comment.

Sorokin spoke to Insider over [Zoom](#) on Sunday night from a hotel room (she's looking for an apartment in New York) and [wearing a \\$720 Balenciaga hoodie](#). She declined to get into the details of her trial or the actions that led to her conviction, citing the advice of her attorneys while her appeal is pending, or the risk of being deported back to Germany.

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In her first published interview since her release from prison, Sorokin talked about the memoir she's working on ("my take on the criminal justice system"), life in prison ("a huge waste of time"), and regret ("a useless feeling").

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

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You spent time at two different correctional facilities: 19 months in jail at Rikers Island, and 21 months in prison at Albion Correctional Facility. What were they like for you?

I made it work. I'm not coming from a place where it's, "Oh, all right, whatever. Put me in jail. I don't care." I was upset about it. But it's just not so bad as to act as a deterrent for any future crimes, you know? You're just there. You can't have any clothes or a phone. But whatever. If you focus on the stuff that you like and want to do it, you can make it work.

I took this "Phase Three" program to teach people how to transition back out of prison. They show you these videos. They still have VHS tapes. They're basically telling you how to get a job, and telling you to look at classified ads, which is so crazy because this is not what the world is right now. It's just pointless. It's a huge waste of time.

And so many people, they come to prison and just start doing drugs. And I cannot blame them. If that was my thing, I would just be getting high all the time.

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I was old enough to know who I am and what I want. But I see so many girls, they're like 18, 19, they come to prison and they just don't know what's going on. They don't have any family support or whatever. And they just start doing drugs in there. I never saw as many drugs in New York as I did in prison.

You were sent to Albion after your conviction in May 2019. What was a typical day like there?

There's not a typical day. There's always something going on. Females are crazy.

You either have a school or a job. The whole thing is a fraud. The job is supposed to be like last three hours, or three hours and 30 minutes. But what you end up doing is 15 minutes of work or whatever, and they let you go.

It's about who you know. It's kind of like the scene in New York, but amplified. Because if you know the right officers, they're going to get you the right job. And so I had a job in a gym because I just wanted to work out when no one else would go. And they give it to me. It's all about who you know and what people think of you.

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who you were?

Absolutely. All of them. Every single one of them knew who I was.

How did that affect your experience there?

Some of them, I guess, came from a place where they wanted to fuck with me. One of the sergeants, he was like, "Well, who would you think you are? I had Amy Fisher." [laughs]. Alright. I'm not trying to compete with her or anything.

A lot of them were just very inappropriate, very unprofessional. Like, "Oh my gosh, I love your story. I'm following you on Instagram."

The New York Times quoted you two years ago, after your sentencing, as saying you're "not sorry" for what you did. You reportedly gave the parole board a different response. Could you clarify the record? How do you feel about your time as a "fake heiress"?

Well, the New York Times asked me, "Do you regret anything?" And I think regret is

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And do you still feel that way? That regret is a useless feeling?

I have to deal with the consequences of my actions, yeah. But to just sit around and just think about everything I've done — it's not going to have changed it. I don't know. It would be a huge waste of my time.

I did what I did. And I was, I don't know, 23, 24, 25. I'm just trying to fix things and move on.

I never really went, "Oh, let me go and defraud City National Bank, that will be the best thing to do ever." Or, "Let me go take this random girl, Rachel, on vacation and make her pay." Who thinks like this?

I feel like it's an insult to my intelligence. Like the whole case that the prosecutors created against me. They presented me as being this thirsty and greedy. I just had this vision. And it didn't work out.

You're saying you want to look forward, and that you don't want to feel regret because it isn't useful. While you were at Albion, how were you reflecting on your time?

I know what I did and, and I know where I'm coming from. And I don't even need any reflection on that. I don't really have a problem with myself as a person, because I know I was never planning on defrauding anyone.

Whoever I would get the money from, I thought they would get it back. So I never needed the time to reflect on that.

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pointless it is.

And it's kind of crazy that they just put everyone together. I was with the craziest people. I feel like I have no place. I made the best out of it, but not everyone would have the option to do so. I have this huge support system. I would have everything I wanted.

But I feel like it's insane. To take people, to lock them up, take everything away from them, and just to expect them to reform. What is that supposed to do for you? You're just deprived of everything. The same solution for everyone, no matter what you've done? When you're a criminal, it's such a different mindset, whether you kill someone, or if you sell drugs. The place where you're coming from is not comparable. They have this universal solution for everyone, and that should not be the case.

Can you tell me what it was like to learn you'd be leaving prison? What was going through your head?

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I never got it. I guess they gave me an impression that I would give my old stuff back, but I never got it yet because my case is under appeal. Which is understandable.

but I never got it yet because my case is under appeal. which is understandable. It's all right. It makes sense.

Are you working on a book about your experience?

Yeah, I am. It's going to be something similar to the previous three pieces I posted on my website. But I have literally 10 boxes full of paperwork where I've been writing down my words from Rikers and Albion. So I just need to get everything together.

It's going to be my take on the criminal justice system and my jail experience. I feel like so much stuff that's out there, it's just focused on how cruel prisons are, or whatever. This was not my experience at all — maybe it's because I'm female, I did not experience any abuse from the staff.

My point is basically going to be like the pointlessness of the whole thing. They just wasted everyone's time and money.

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I'm just kind of filming everything I'm doing right now and I'm going to see what to do with it later. I just got out of prison, like two days ago. So it's me like getting done this

do with it later. I just got out of prison, like two days ago. So it's like getting all this stuff from Sephora, me opening a bank account as soon as I get permission from my parole officer. I'm going to see my parole officer Tuesday for the first time. Things like that. It's a way to control what I want to tell.

So many people, I see, are trying to tell my narrative. I just decided to do something on my own.

Why are you still using the name Anna Delvey?

Why shouldn't I? I'm a movement by myself.

Disclosure: Mathias Döpfner, CEO of Business Insider's parent company, Axel Springer, is a Netflix board member.

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Jacob Shamsian Feb 15, 2021, 1:44 AM



Anna Sorokin, who claimed to be a German heiress named Anna Delvey, during her trial in April 2019. Mary Altaffer/AP

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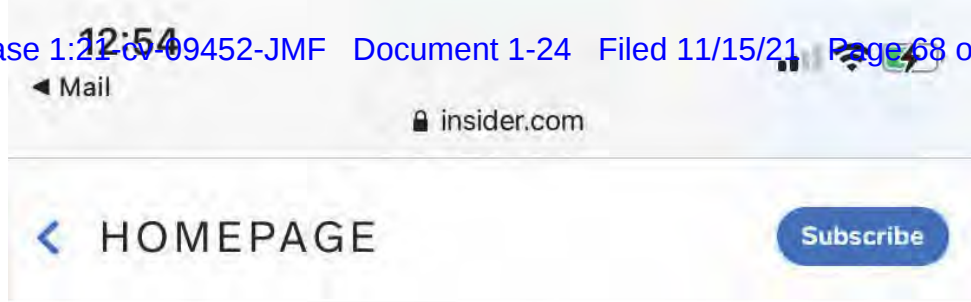
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After nearly four years behind bars, Anna Sorokin was released from prison Thursday.

Sorokin — who also goes by Anna Delvey — became famous in 2018, following stories in Vanity Fair and New York magazine about her living a lavish lifestyle and grifting her way through Manhattan's socialite scene while posing as a German heiress with a \$60 million trust fund. The New York magazine story is now turning into a Netflix limited series produced by Shonda Rhimes, with "Ozark" star Julia Garner playing Sorokin.

After using her false identity to attempt to obtain loans from financial institutions, Sorokin was arrested on larceny charges in 2017 and sent to Rikers Island to await trial. She was convicted on most of the charges in 2019 and sent to Albion Correctional Facility in upstate New York.

Now out on parole for good behavior, she's

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been keeping busy. Sorokin has created a new Twitter account, published an open letter to Harvey Weinstein, and has posted on Instagram about a new project called Anna Delvey TV, an attempt to wrest the public narrative about her life back under her control.

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She is also appealing her case. Much of the funds Sorokin was convicted of stealing were intended for the Anna Delvey Foundation, a planned art and restaurant space, she said. Her attorney Audrey A. ¹²⁸

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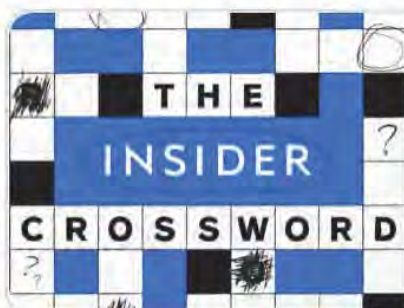
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Thomas previously told Insider that while Sorokin may have owed money on a civil level, her actions didn't rise to the level of criminal conduct. The Manhattan District Attorney's office didn't immediately respond to Insider's request for comment.

Sorokin spoke to Insider over Zoom on Sunday night from a hotel room (she's looking for an apartment in New York) and wearing a \$720 Balenciaga hoodie. She declined to get into the details of her trial or the actions that led to her conviction, citing the advice of her attorneys while her appeal is pending, or the risk of being deported back to Germany.



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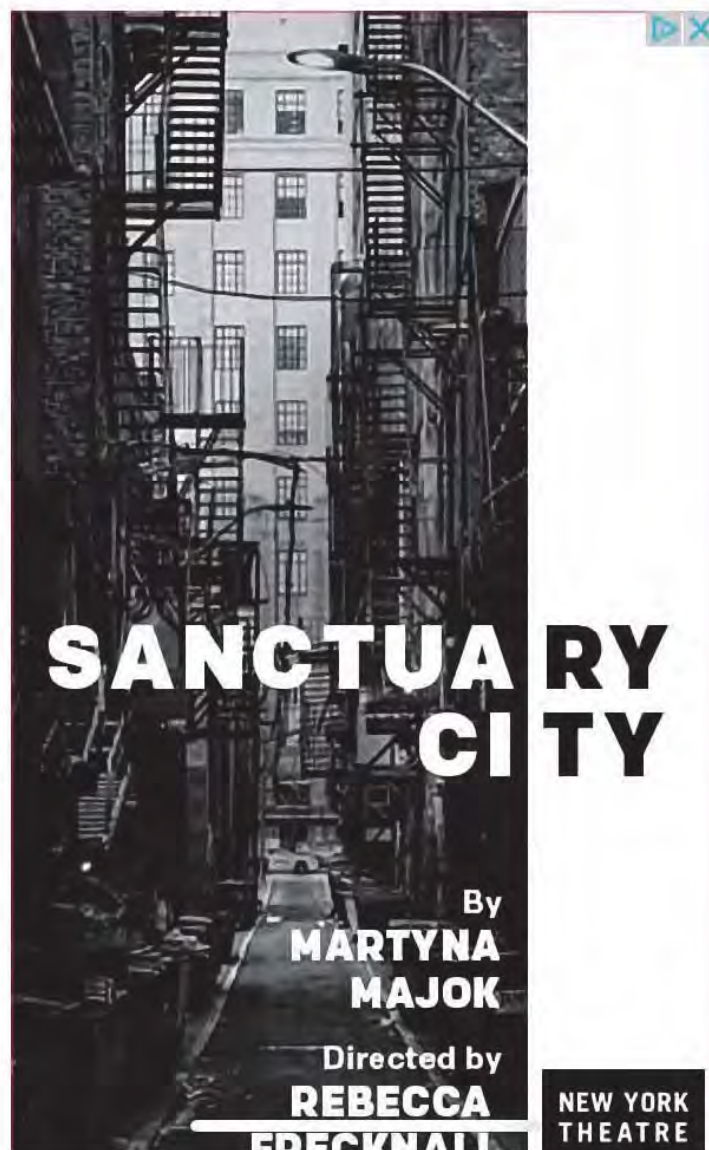
In her first published interview since her release from prison, Sorokin talked about

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the memoir she's working on ("my take on the criminal justice system"), life in prison ("a huge waste of time"), and regret ("a useless feeling").

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.



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You spent time at two different correctional facilities: 19 months in jail at Rikers Island, and 21 months in prison at Albion Correctional Facility. What were they like for you?

I made it work. I'm not coming from a place where it's, "Oh, all right, whatever. Put me in jail. I don't care." I was upset about it. But it's just not so bad as to act as a deterrent for any future crimes, you know? You're just there. You can't have any clothes or a phone. But whatever. If you focus on the stuff that you like and want to do it, you can make it work.

I took this "Phase Three" program to teach people how to transition back out of prison. They show you these videos. They still have VHS tapes. They're basically telling you how to get a job, and telling you to look at classified ads, which is so crazy because this is not what the world is right now. It's just pointless. It's a huge waste of time.

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And so many people, they come to prison and just start doing drugs. And I cannot blame them. If that was my thing, I would just be getting high all the time.

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I was old enough to know who I am and what I want. But I see so many girls, they're like 18, 19, they come to prison and they just don't know what's going on. They don't have any family support or whatever. And they just start doing drugs in there. I never saw as many drugs in New York as I did in prison.

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You were sent to Albion after your conviction in May 2019. What was a typical day like there?

There's not a typical day. There's always something going on. Females are crazy.

You either have a school or a job. The whole thing is a fraud. The job is supposed to like last three hours, or three hours and 30 minutes. But what you end up doing is 15 minutes of work or whatever, and they let you go.

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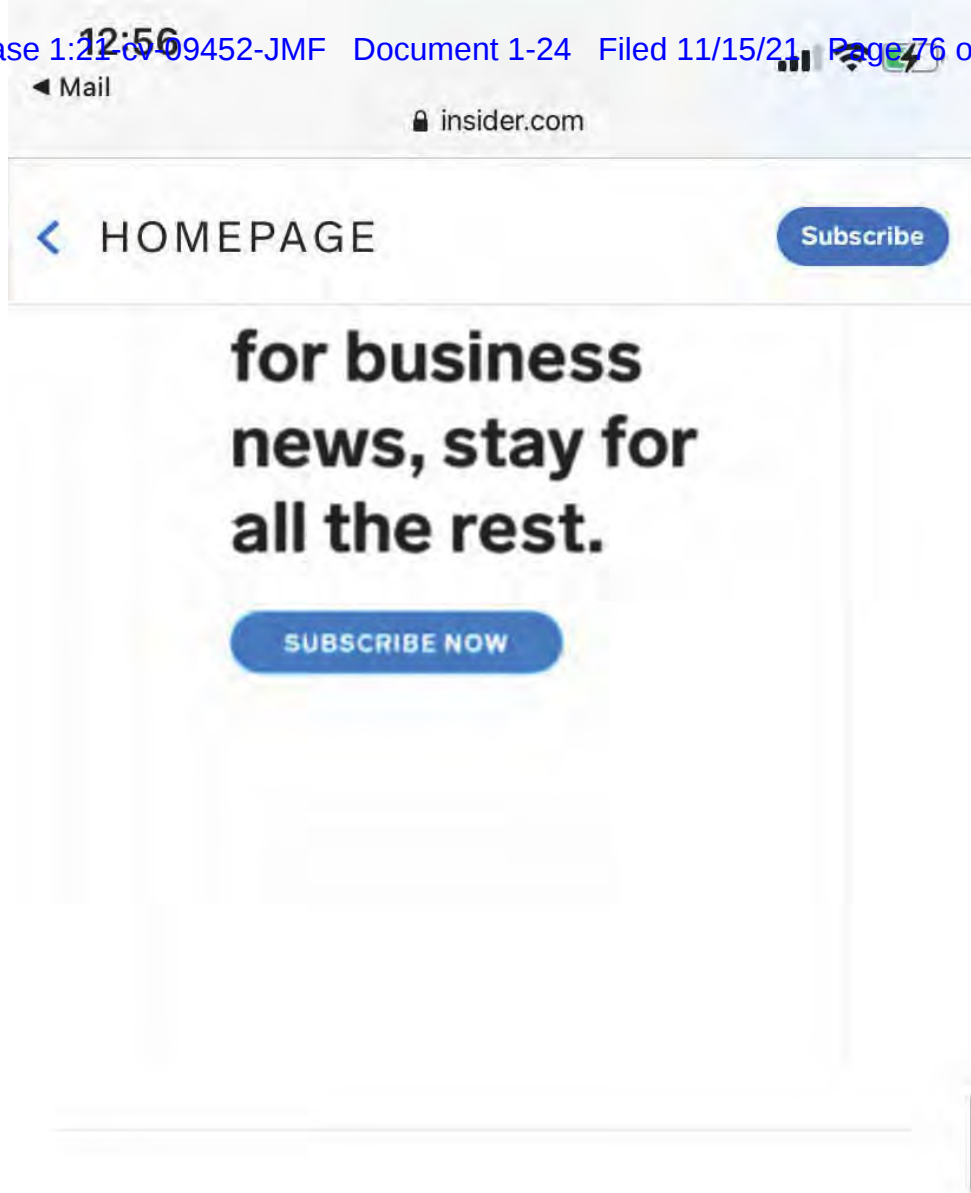
It's about who you know. It's kind of like the scene in New York, but amplified. Because if you know the right officers, they're going to get you the right job. And so I had a job in a gym because I just wanted to work out when no one else would go. And they give it to me. It's all about who you know and what people think of you.

Did you have a celebrity status in prison?
Did the correctional officers know who you were?

Absolutely. All of them. Every single one of them knew who I was.

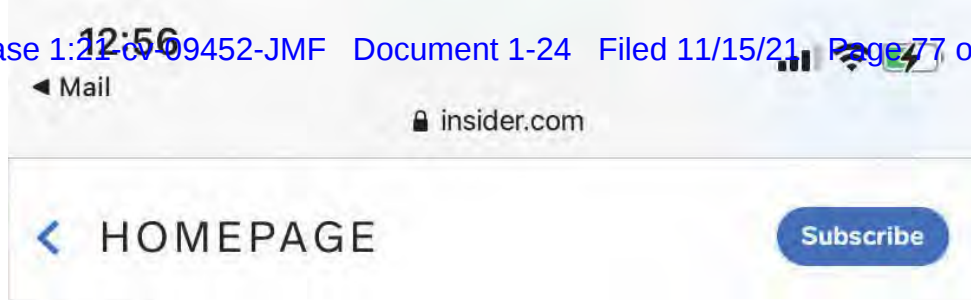
How did that affect your experience there?

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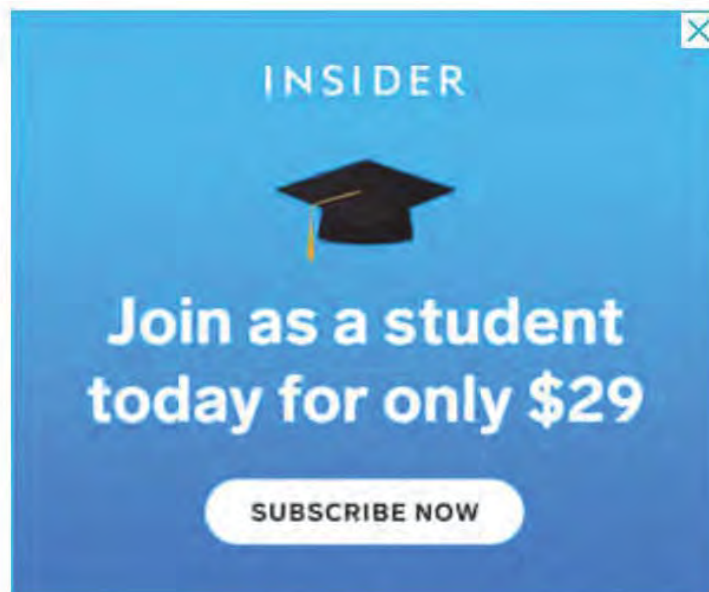
Some of them, I guess, came from a place where they wanted to fuck with me. One of the sergeants, he was like, "Well, who would you think you are? I had Amy Fisher." [laughs]. Alright. I'm not trying to compete with her or anything.

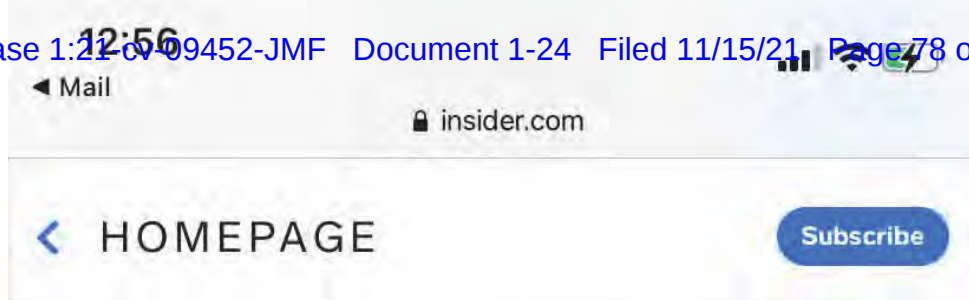
A lot of them were just very inappropriate, very unprofessional. Like, "Oh my gosh, I love your story. I'm following you on Instagram."



The New York Times quoted you two years ago, after your sentencing, as saying you're "not sorry" for what you did. You reportedly gave the parole board a different response. Could you clarify the record? How do you feel about your time as a "fake heiress"?

Well, the New York Times asked me, "Do you regret anything?" And I think regret is just a useless feeling because I clearly cannot go back in time and change anything. And this is what they made out of it.





And do you still feel that way? That regret is a useless feeling?

I have to deal with the consequences of my actions, yeah. But to just sit around and just think about everything I've done — it's not going to have changed it. I don't know. It would be a huge waste of my time.

I did what I did. And I was, I don't know, 23, 24, 25. I'm just trying to fix things and move on.

I never really went, "Oh, let me go and defraud City National Bank, that will be the best thing to do ever." Or, "Let me go take this random girl, Rachel, on vacation and make her pay." Who thinks like this?



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I feel like it's an insult to my intelligence. Like the whole case that the prosecutors created against me. They presented me as being this thirsty and greedy. I just had this vision. And it didn't work out.

You're saying you want to look forward, and that you don't want to feel regret because it isn't useful. While you were at Albion, how were you reflecting on your time?

I know what I did and, and I know where I'm coming from. And I don't even need any reflection on that. I don't really have a problem with myself as a person, because I know I was never planning on defrauding anyone.

Whoever I would get the money from, I thought they would get it back. So I never needed the time to reflect on that.

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What I did have the time to reflect on was the criminal justice system — how pointless it is.

And it's kind of crazy that they just put everyone together. I was with the craziest people. I feel like I have no place. I made the best out of it, but not everyone would have the option to do so. I have this huge support system. I would have everything I wanted.

But I feel like it's insane. To take people, to lock them up, take everything away from them, and just to expect them to reform. What is that supposed to do for you? You're just deprived of everything. The same solution for everyone, no matter what you've done? When you're a criminal, it's such a different mindset, whether you kill someone, or if you sell drugs. The place where you're coming from is not comparable. They have this universal solution for everyone, and that should not be the case.

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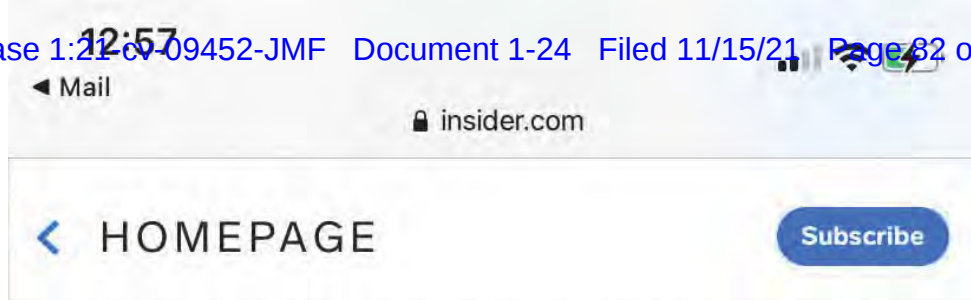
Can you tell me what it was like to learn you'd be leaving prison? What was going through your head?

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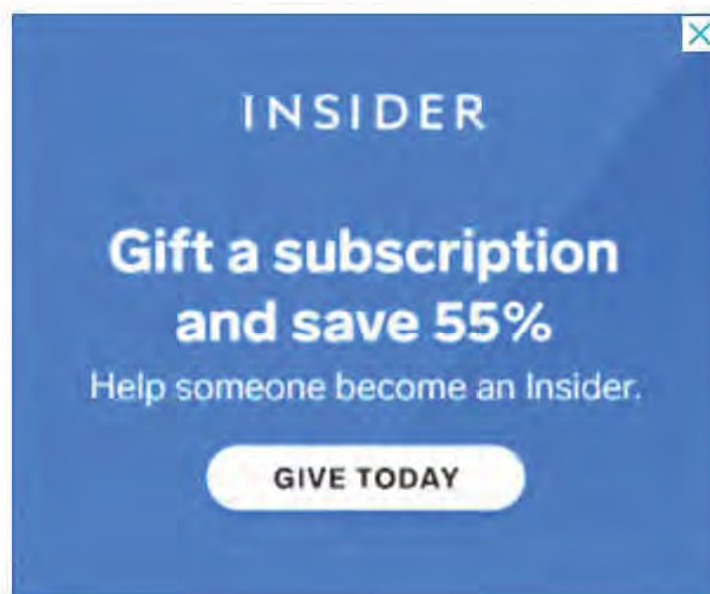
I was thinking, "I want my phone."

I never got it. I guess they gave me an impression that I would give my old stuff back, but I never got it yet because my case is under appeal. Which is understandable. It's all right. It makes sense.



Are you working on a book about your experience?

Yeah, I am. It's going to be something similar to the previous three pieces I posted on my website. But I have literally 10 boxes full of paperwork where I've been writing down my words from Rikers and Albion. So I just need to get everything together.



It's going to be my take on the criminal justice system and my jail experience. I feel like so much stuff that's out there, it's just

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It's going to be my take on the criminal justice system and my jail experience. I feel like so much stuff that's out there, it's just focused on how cruel prisons are, or whatever. This was not my experience at all — maybe it's because I'm female, I did not experience any abuse from the staff.

My point is basically going to be like the pointlessness of the whole thing. They just wasted everyone's time and money.

What is Anna Delvey TV?

I'm just kind of filming everything I'm doing right now and I'm going to see what to do with it later. I just got out of prison, like two days ago. So it's me like getting all this stuff from Sephora, me opening a bank account as soon as I get permission from my parole officer. I'm going to see my parole officer Tuesday for the first time. Things like that. It's a way to control what I want to tell.

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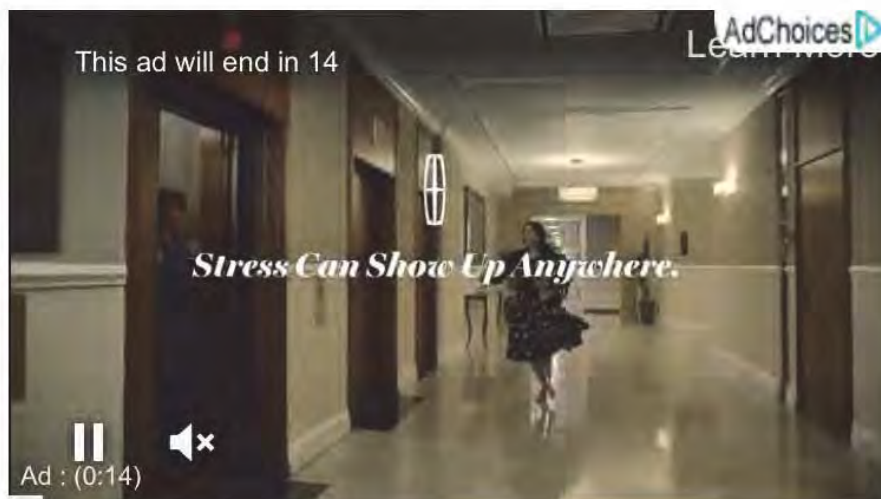
So many people, I see, are trying to tell my narrative. I just decided to do something on my own.

Why are you still using the name Anna Delvey?

Why shouldn't I? I'm a movement by myself.

Disclosure: Mathias Döpfner, CEO of Business Insider's parent company, Axel Springer, is a Netflix board member.

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